

SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR ZONING OFFICER SERVICES

The Schuylkill County Board of Commissioners, through the County Planning, Zoning and GIS Department, is soliciting proposals from qualified firms and individuals to provide Zoning services in accordance with this RFP. Interested applicants shall provide an individual having a minimum of 2 years of Municipal Zoning experience. The RFP is available at the Schuylkill County Planning, Zoning and GIS Department located in the Schuylkill County Courthouse, 401 N 2nd St, Pottsville PA, 17901, between the hours of 8:30AM and 4:00PM, Monday through Friday or on the Schuylkill County website at <https://schuylkillcountypa.gov/>.

All proposals shall include one (1) original of the proposal including attachments. A copy of the proposals plus attachments included on an external thumb drive shall also be provided. Proposals shall be submitted and delivered to: ATTN Susan Smith, Planning and GIS Director at the above address, prior to 12PM on Wednesday, December 14, 2022. Envelopes shall be sealed and marked "Proposal for Zoning Officer Services (2023)".

The Schuylkill County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to choose the proposal which, in its judgement, is best suited for the intended purposes and reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, with or without cause, and waive any irregularities or informalities in the proposals. The County reserves the right to re-solicit proposals.

General Information

Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania is a 4th Class County and operates with an elected 3-member Board of Commissioners and a County Administrator. Schuylkill County, through the Planning, Zoning and GIS Department governs the zoning and subdivision for approximately half of the 67 municipalities in the county (Table 1). The County has a 9-member Planning Commission, which meets the second Wednesday of each month for their regular meeting. The County also has a 5-member Zoning Hearing Board, which meets the first Wednesday of each month as necessary.

Table 1. Municipalities governed by County Zoning and Subdivision & Land Development Ordinances

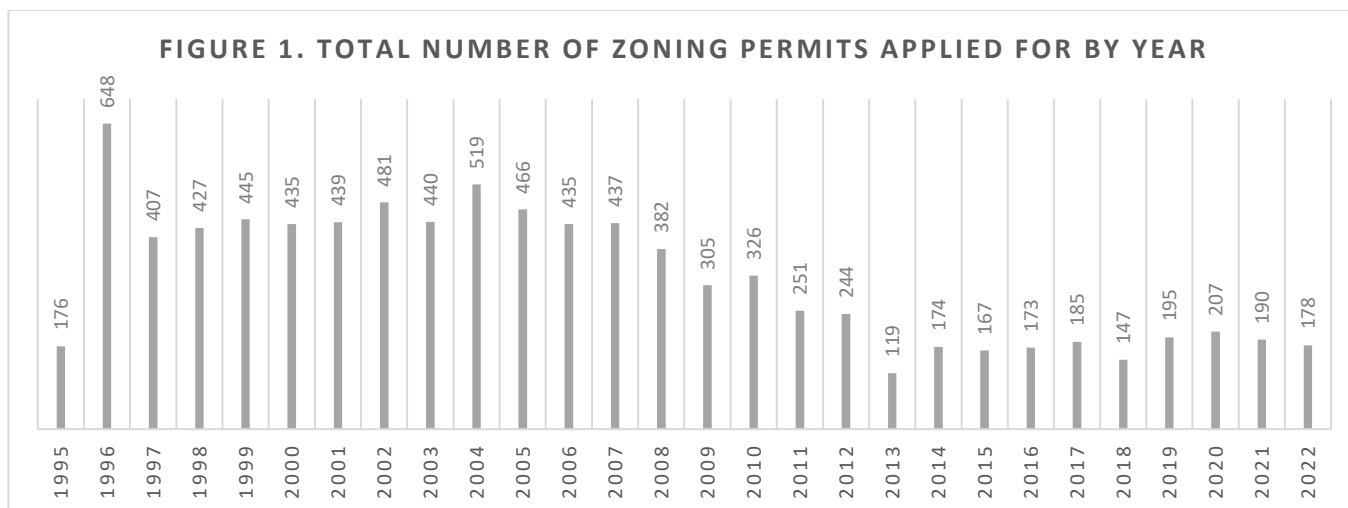
Townships	Boroughs	
Barry	Ashland	Minersville
Delano ¹	Auburn	Mount Carbon
East Norwegian	Deer Lake ²	New Philadelphia
Eldred	Frackville	New Ringgold
Frailey	Gilberton	Palo Alto
North Union	Girardville	Pine Grove
Porter	Gordon	Port Carbon
Reilly	Landingville	Port Clinton
Tremont ¹	Mahanoy City	Tower City
Union	McAdoo ²	Tremont
Upper Mahantongo	Mechanicsville	
Washington	Middleport	

¹Only governed by Schuylkill Zoning Ordinance. Maintains own SALDO.

²Only governed by Schuylkill SALDO. Maintains own Zoning Ordinance.

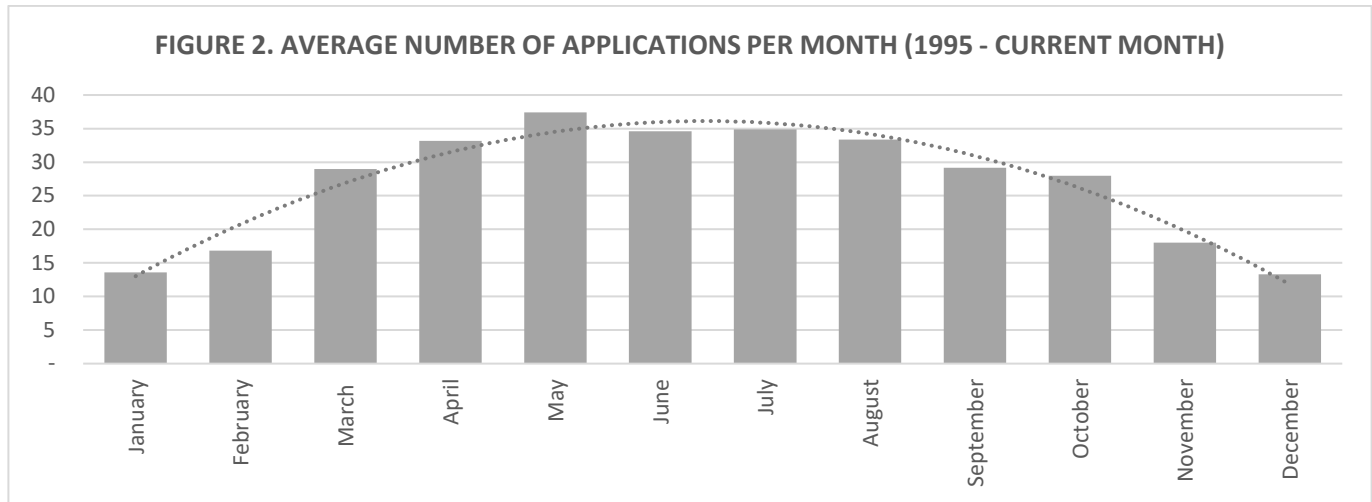
Schuylkill County has a 2020 Census population of 143,049. The total population of the municipalities governed under the County’s Zoning Ordinance is 41,387 (2020 Census) or approximately 30% of the total population. There are a total of 89,963 land parcels within Schuylkill County; 28,587 parcels or 32% of the total land parcels are within municipalities governed under the County Zoning Ordinance.

The average number of zoning permits received in the last five years (2018 – 2022YTD) is 183. Between 2008 and 2014, 5 municipalities opted to enact their own Zoning Ordinances, this primarily accounts for the decrease in permit activity following the same period (Figure 1).



The majority of permits issued are located in Washington, Porter, North Union, and Union Townships. In the last five years (2018 -2022YTD), permit applications from these 4 municipalities account for 50% of the permits issued annually. Correspondingly, the majority of permits issued are located in the A (Agricultural) Zoning District. Permit approvals in the R-3 (High Density Residential District) follows.

Permit activity clearly follows the typical construction season and peaks between April and July (Figure 2).



On average, 7 Zoning Hearing Board applications are received annually.

Dates

Following release of the RFP, all organizations interested in submitting a proposal in response to this RFP must respond by 12PM on Wednesday, December 14, 2022. All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by Thursday, December 8, 2022 by 12PM to the County Point of Contact identified below. All questions and responses will be posted on the Schuylkill County website by Friday, December 9, 2022 by Close of Business (COB).

Milestone	Date/Time
Release of RFP	November 22, 2022/COB
Deadline for Questions	December 8, 2022/12PM
Responses from County	December 9, 2022/COB
RFP Responses Due	December 14, 2022/12PM
Interviews – Virtual (if required)	December 19, 2022
Tentative Award Date	December 28, 2022

The County reserves the right to alter this schedule. Changes to the schedule will be posted to the County website. Respondents are expected to fully adhere to the schedule.

Point of Contact

The County Point of Contact for this RFP is:

Susan A Smith
 Planning and GIS Director
 401 N Second St
 Pottsville PA 17901
 570-628-1038
ssmith@co.schuylkill.pa.us

Scope of Services

The Scope of Services required under this RFP includes serving as the County's Zoning Officer to enforce the Schuylkill County Zoning Ordinance. The services to be provided will include, but not be limited to:

TASK 1: Zoning Application Review

Zoning Permit applications will be reviewed and a determination made as to whether the application is complete. The Zoning Officer will issue permits only where there is compliance with the provisions of the zoning ordinance.

- When an application is incomplete, the Zoning Officer will prepare incomplete letters using the County's "Incomplete Letter" template to be included in the application return.
- When an application is complete and approved, the Zoning Officer will prepare the Zoning Permit using the County's Zoning Permit form.
- When an application is complete and denied, the Zoning Officer will prepare a denial letter using the County's "Denial Letter" template.

The Zoning Officer will coordinate with County staff the return of all applications, letters and other documentation. County Planning staff will be responsible for distribution of incomplete letters, zoning permits, and denial letters via email or regular email to applicants, the municipalities, and other stakeholders. The County will maintain the original files.

TASK 2: Zoning Hearing Board Applications

Zoning Hearing Board applications will be reviewed and a determination made whether they are complete.

- When a Zoning Hearing Board application is incomplete, the Zoning Officer will prepare an incomplete letter using the County's "Incomplete Letter" template to be included with the return of the hearing board application.
- When complete applications are received, the Zoning Officer will complete the following tasks and meet the deadlines established in the annual Zoning Staff schedule:
 - Prepare the public notice using the County's preferred format for the given Zoning Hearing per the annual hearing schedule
 - Send the public notice for review and approval by the Planning Director
 - Final public notices should be sent to both the Planning Director and Planning Secretary. County Planning staff will be responsible for forwarding the public notice to the paper for publication and mailing the public notice as required by the Ordinance and MPC.
 - Determine the locations for posting the property with the notice. Notify the Planning Secretary of the number of copies needed to post. Post the property and remove posting as may be necessary.
- After a decision by the Zoning Hearing Board has been made, if an approval, issue a Zoning Permit.

The Zoning Officer will coordinate with County staff the return of all applications, letters and other documentation. County Planning staff will be responsible for distribution of incomplete letters, zoning permits, and public notices. The County will print and laminate the notice for posting. The County will furnish supplies needed for posting. The County will maintain the original files.

TASK 3: Zoning Ordinance Violations and Enforcements

The Zoning Ordinance states that the Zoning Officer is only required to record and investigate an alleged violation of the Ordinance if the Zoning Officer receives a written and signed complaint that includes the name, address, and telephone number of the person filing the complaint and a sufficient description of the location. The Zoning Officer, at their discretion, may investigate complaints received from other sources (for example: from a

municipal code officer, from tax assessment records). The Zoning Officer will be responsible for monitoring responses to enforcement notices.

- The Zoning Officer will receive zoning ordinance complaints.
- The Zoning Officer must investigate zoning ordinance complaints that meet the requirements of the ordinance for written complaints. The Zoning Officer may, at their discretion, respond to other complaints at their discretion. The Zoning Officer must notify the County upon initiation of investigation.
- When an investigation is warranted, the Zoning Officer will conduct a site visit(s) and document the property with pictures, sketches, etc. as appropriate.
- The Zoning Officer will make a determination as to whether a violation of the ordinance has occurred. The Zoning Officer may choose to informally request compliance or initiate a formal enforcement notice. In both cases, the Zoning Officer will use the preferred County letter template for “Informal Compliance” and “Enforcement Notice”.
- All compliance and enforcement letters must include a date for which the property owner must respond. It will be the responsibility of the Zoning Officer to monitor that date. If a response is not received by the required date, the Zoning Officer shall advise the Planning Director of the missed deadline and follow with additional actions as may be required.

The Zoning Officer will coordinate with County staff the return of all letters and other documentation. County Planning staff will be responsible for mailing all letters. The County will maintain the original files.

TASK 4: Zoning Review for Subdivision and Land Development Plans Governed by County SALDO

When the County receives a Subdivision and Land Development Plan, a determination on completeness must be made. Pursuant to the County SALDO, a plan application may be considered incomplete if the plan does not comply with the regulations of the Schuylkill County Zoning Ordinance. When a plan is complete, the technical review report (Reviewing Engineers Report) must include a report from the County Zoning Officer.

- The Zoning Officer will review newly submitted subdivision and land development plans and determine whether the plan complies with the Schuylkill County Zoning Ordinance.
- When a plan does not comply with the zoning ordinance, the Zoning Officer will send an email to County Planning Staff notifying them of the reasons the plan does not comply, which will include the specific sections of the ordinance. County Staff will prepare and distribute the plan incomplete letter.
- When a plan does comply with the zoning ordinance, the Zoning Officer will update the monthly plan Zoning report using the County’s preferred memo format and transmit that to the appropriate County staff and/or reviewing engineers.
- The Zoning Officer will be required to review plan revisions and comment responses from applicants and update the Zoning Officer comments as may be necessary.

Determination of completeness is time-sensitive with a short window and must meet the deadlines established in the annual Planning Staff schedule.

TASK 5: Miscellaneous Zoning Officer Tasks

There are a variety of other Zoning Officer tasks that will be required (list is not exclusive but a representation of the more frequent activities):

- Respond promptly to zoning questions. The County has a dedicated Zoning Officer email (zoning@co.schuylkill.pa.us) and phone number with voice mail (570-628-1416).
- Receive requests for written requests of nonconformity pursuant to the County Ordinance. The Zoning Officer will make a determination as to nonconformity. If the use is found to be legal, nonconforming, the Zoning Officer will prepare the written response using the County’s preferred form.

- Receive zoning verification requests. These are formal requests which require a response letter using the County's preferred form.
- Attend Zoning Hearings as may be necessary. The Zoning Officer is not required to attend all Zoning Hearings; however, the Zoning Officer may be required to attend the hearing when the matter involves an appeal of a decision, an enforcement or by subpoena.

All reviews for all tasks shall be conducted or responded to within seven (7) calendar days unless a specific deadline is established on the Planning and Zoning Staff schedules. If the business or the nature of the application and extended review time is needed, the applicant and the County shall be notified within seven (7) calendar days.

County staff will assist as able in providing support services as needed, including acting as agents in day-to-day administration of the zoning ordinance and distributing by mail or electronic mail all letters, permits, and other documents.

Proposal Content

While there is not a specific page limitation, the Proposals shall provide a straightforward, concise description of the Respondent's ability to fulfill the requirements of the Scope of Services, as set forth in this RFP. In order to ensure a uniform review process and to obtain the maximum degree of comparability, it is required that the Proposals include the information and be organized in the manner specified below:

1. **Provide an overview of the firm.** Describe your organization or the individual professionals in terms of history, primary business, and former or current clients. Please include ownership and contact information.
2. **Demonstrate the Respondent's knowledge and understanding of the Scope of Services with specific examples of similar efforts.** The Respondent should clearly state its understanding of the County's need for Zoning Services and the role a Zoning Officer plays in the County and for the municipalities for which the County governs the zoning. Local knowledge should be indicated. Specific examples and insights should be provided.
3. **Describe your approach to completing the Scope of Services.** The Respondent should describe its general approach to serving as a Zoning Officer for the County, how it will communicate with the County Planning Department, and the policies it will follow when interacting with the County on applications on a day-to-day basis.
4. **Demonstrate the Respondent's relevant experience and qualifications.** The respondent should provide a description of its experience and expertise providing Zoning Services in the role of Zoning Officer for similar communities. Experience with zoning permit application reviews, enforcements, Zoning Hearings, plan reviews and general planning matters should be explained. Include a summary of each such relevant project experience.
5. **Indicate how the Respondent is available to provide the services requested.** The Selected Consultant must be capable of responding to the County's needs in a timely manner, complete reviews on time, follow a Department Staff schedule, provide appropriate follow-up, and be an efficient resource for the County. The consultant should address how it will provide effective service to the County.
6. **Identify who will be assigned to this project and at least one alternate.** Provide names, qualifications, resumes, licenses and certifications for the personnel who will perform services for the County. The County, by motion and approval of the Board of Commissioners, will name the primary staff member as the Zoning Officer and the Proposer's alternate as an Assistant Zoning Officer. The Zoning Officer must be the primary

staff member assigned to the project. The Selected Consultant's alternate shall only perform the duties of the Zoning Officer when the primary Zoning Officer is unavailable due to time-off from work or other similar circumstances. The County Planning Director also serves as an Assistant Zoning Officer. If the Zoning Officer is unavailable, the County shall be notified that the Assistant will be performing the duties for a specific duration. The staff member assigned as the Zoning Officer must remain assigned and available to the County for the duration of the contract period unless such person leaves the employment of the Selected Consultant or the County agrees in writing to modify the assigned staff. If the named Zoning Officer or Assistant Zoning Officer leaves the employment of the Selected Consultant during the course of the contract, the County must be notified immediately and the Selected Consultant must submit the name and credentials of the person replacing the Zoning Officer or Assistant Zoning Officer for approval by the County prior to that person starting work.

7. **Submit at least three (3) municipal client references.** Include the names, phone numbers and emails of references and describe the service provided for the client. References should be for clients for which similar or related services were provided within the last five (5) years.
8. **Include a Cost Proposal.** Include a schedule of the proposed hourly billing rates for the assigned staff. The payment for services will be on an hourly basis. Expenses for telephone, facsimile and computer charges will not be allowed. Travel expenses related to enforcements and zoning hearing board postings will be allowed.

All proposals shall include one (1) original of the proposal including attachments. A PDF electronic version shall also be submitted. Proposals shall be submitted and delivered to the Point of Contact by the RFP Response Due Date and Time. Envelopes shall be sealed and marked "Proposal for Zoning Officer Services (2023)". No fax, electronic or email submittals will be accepted. Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted. Any costs associated with the preparation of the proposal in response to this RFP are borne by the Respondent.

Evaluation and Selection

The County will review any and all responses received by the submission deadline that include all information required by this RFP. The award of services associated with this RFP may or may not be made to the Respondent submitting the lowest price Cost Proposal. The award will be made to the Respondent whose Proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the County, taking into consideration, without limitation the evaluation factors set forth below:

1. Experience, qualifications and commitment of the Respondent including the degree to which personnel have held responsible positions for similar services; the experience and familiarity with zoning administration and enforcement, the PA Municipalities Planning Code, and general planning matters; the specific commitments made in the Proposal for staffing; experience in Schuylkill County; and any other experience and/or criteria the County deems relevant.
2. Experience and past performance of the Respondent and personnel on similar projects within the last five (5) years including the ability of the Respondent to draw on experience to benefit the County.
3. The method of accomplishing the scope of services including the proposed organization, understanding of the level of effort, appropriate availability to the County.

Based on an evaluation of the written proposal, the County may require respondents to participate in interviews (to be conducted via ZOOM). Failure of a Respondent to interview when requested may result in rejection of the Respondent's proposals.

The County will select a Respondent if the County determines that an appropriate, acceptable and complete Proposal is submitted by a responsible Respondent which the County, at its sole and exclusive discretion, determines is best suited for the intended purposes and will provide the best overall value to the County. The Schuylkill County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, with or without cause, and waive any irregularities or informalities in the proposals. The County reserves the right to re-solicit proposals.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND INVOICING

The County will notify the Selected Consultant with a “Notice of Award”. The Selected Consultant and the County will execute a contract for the completion of the Services identified within this RFP. The contract, when executed, shall be deemed to be the entire agreement between the parties. This RFP and the Selected Consultant’s response will be attached as exhibits to the Contract.

The Schuylkill County Planning Department is responsible for administering the contract and overseeing the projects. Invoices shall be submitted to the attention of the Point of Contact for this RFP. The Selected Consultant shall invoice monthly for the prior month. Invoices should be separated and summarized by Task as identified in the Scope of Services identified above. Expenses for organizing and formatting invoices will not be allowed.